

CES Letter Author's Response to Brett's Open Letter to John Dehlin

I want to thank Brett for his [open letter](#) to John Dehlin in response to John's Facebook post regarding the CES Letter.

I want to start off by saying that I am not against Brett. I agree with several points in Brett's letter. We may disagree on a few points, but I think the weight of our agreements outweigh our disagreements. I have no problem with members of the Church staying and believing after learning about the issues and problems. I just want members and investigators to have that opportunity to know about the problems so that they can make a balanced decision as to whether or not they want to devote and commit their lives to Mormonism.

There is good in the Church. There are good people. No doubt about it. Indeed, as Brett stated, "I love the church – the people in it...There are so many opportunities to serve and help others. There are great friends to be made."

I grew up and had a testimony of correlated Mormonism. I was what I now refer to as a "Chapel Mormon". I stuck with the program. I sustained its "prophets, seers, and revelators". I stayed within the bounds of "approved materials" and my testimony was based on the narrative and story that the LDS Church fed and sold to me, and which I fed and sold to others in the mission field for two years.

So, my letter was written within the framework of the LDS Church (or "Corporate Church" as some may refer to it). It was not written for unorthodox believers who either believe in the foundational events of the restoration but subsequent apostasy of the current Church, or who believe that the teachings of the Church are mostly figurative and symbolic not meant to be taken literally.

I'm going to address several of Brett's points and claims below. Brett's comments are in red while my response is in black.

Brett says:

I'm probably on a fool's errand, but I would like to make the case for belief. I do not pretend to have the answers for anything. However, I believe there are enough legitimate reasons that support investigating the veracity of the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith. And THAT is what I will attempt to communicate.

I recognize how difficult it is to believe. Developing faith is hard. I don't fault anyone for not believing. I'm not so certain that I'm right. Five years from now, I might be thinking the same as you. I'd like to just give this one shot and give it all I've got. I hope that at the end of this, I will have added to your view, or at least you can say, "Yeah, that paradigm (or another similar) is worth investigating." Because that is all we have really, paradigms and models through which we view the world. Some models are closer to truth than others. While not complete, and even possibly totally erroneous, I believe that my paradigm is closer to the truth now, than my paradigm was 5 years ago.

Jeremy's response:

I appreciate and accept this viewpoint. Mormonism would be truly amazing and refreshing if it embraced this level of honesty, humility, vulnerability, and openness to discuss, share, and debate worldviews, paradigms, and issues.

Brett says:

But see, I do have a small problem with that. There are many ways of viewing the church/gospel.

Jeremy's response:

Sure, in private. It's when you start becoming vocal, open, and public about your way of "viewing the church/gospel" that your head becomes a candidate for the chopping block. September Six is evidence of this. Denver Snuffer's recent excommunication is evidence of this. Brent Larsen is another example. Rock Waterman is yet another example.

The reality is that in 2014, Mormonism (or "Corporate Church," as you refer to it) is still an orthodox fundamentalist binary black/white true/false religion.

I agree that there are "many ways of viewing the church/gospel". FLDS is one way. Community of Christ (RLDS) is another way. Apostolic United Brethren is another way. Strangites is another way. One thing you have in common with all of these groups is that you view the LDS Church as apostate and corrupt.

We could debate with all of the splinter groups of Mormonism and why their worldview is legitimate and the modern LDS Church is not. I see this as a fruitless approach as the modern LDS Church is only part of the problem. The *real* problem is the *foundation* of Mormonism: Joseph Smith, his claims, and what happened (or didn't happen) between 1820-1844.

Brett says:

Those who grow up in the church are fed this paradigm that God restored His ancient church through Joseph Smith. That church will retain keys, authority, and will spread throughout the world, will never go astray, and will usher in the Second Coming. All is well in Zion right? As the Presiding High Priest looks out over us and says, "Aren't we all a great looking bunch." (Hel. 13:27-28) We are wonderful aren't we? However, looking at the corporate church today, it's hard to accept that it's a divine institution. Its behavior doesn't resemble what's taught in scripture.

Jeremy's response:

This is the Church that I was referring to when I wrote the letter to the LDS CES Director. As a former Chapel Mormon, I was unaware of the issues and problems that would make one question the Church as a "divine institution". Most of the Church's members today are unaware of the detailed issues and problems that would challenge the LDS Church's divine truth claims.

Brett says:

Do we see any divinity with the corporate church? Or do we see media studies, surveys, polls, and overall general lack of knowledge in which direction we should head? Are we Zion or are we General Motors?

So, what if that is not the right paradigm? Is there a way Joseph Smith could still be a prophet, the Book of Mormon true, and the church be in a total mess? What if the very things we THINK we know about the Book of Mormon aren't what the Book of Mormon is trying to communicate at all? How best do we reconcile the last 180 years?

Jeremy's response:

I like the following comment posted on John's post on Facebook:

Taking his [Brett's] approach only reaffirms in my mind how poorly God, if He exists, has communicated to His children up to now. If God is omniscient, He knows that this approach suggested by Brett is not resonating with the vast amount of those who sincerely seek truth and knowledge through logic and reason while weighing evidence. Utter failure.

In summary, God currently has 15,000,000 members out of 7,200,000,000, which = 0.21%. Out of the 15,000,000 members, let us assume half of those members are active, which = 7,500,000 (being generous), and then let us assume that half of those active members are current temple recommend holders (also generous), which would = 3,750,000. This means that God has successfully

had his plan resonate with .05% of the world population to buy into it. And now we are supposed to believe that the church in general is in apostasy again with a portion of that .05% ? This gives me no hope for the human race. More utter failure. I guess the millennium will truly be a busy time.

Brett says:

Here's one way:

Denver Snuffer wrote a book about how to reconcile the last 180 years. You interviewed him last year. He wrote "Passing the Heavenly Gift" (PTHG) and it offers a paradigm in which one who is aware of the church's historical issues can happily stay a member and not let the idiocies of the corporate church or overbearing bishops/stake presidents get to them. I'd like to make it absolutely clear that I in no way speak for Denver, or am even attempting to summarize (PTGH). This letter is not about that. It's about how I see the church, how I understand the gospel, and why I still believe in the Book of Mormon. I'm just suggesting that you may have lost an opportunity to reconcile your faith with a workable paradigm. And perhaps it's because of PTHG that has allowed me to change my paradigm. Or better said, PTHG enables me to better articulate my own paradigm, because I have had these questions just hanging out there in an incoherent way for some time.

Jeremy's response:

I'm glad that Brett has found his "workable paradigm" from Snuffer's PTHG. It sounds like he would be in trouble without the PTHG to glean and mold his new paradigm from. What if PTHG didn't exist? What else would Brett have to lean on for his new workable paradigm? Is this really the best system or framework that an omnipotent Mormon god has to give His children in revealing His truth?

I reject Brett's simplistic characterization of Mormonism's historical problems as "the idiocies of the corporate church or overbearing bishops/stake presidents." Whether Brett likes it or not, these problems go into the very heart of Joseph Smith Mormonism and have more to do with Joseph Smith and what happened in the founding days of the "restoration" than it has to do with the modern "Corporate Church" and the "idiocies" of its "overbearing bishops/stake presidents."

The Book of Abraham is a fraud. It directly challenges Joseph Smith's own claims.

The Kinderhook Plates is a fraud. It directly challenges Joseph Smith's own claims.

The inconsistencies and contradictions of the multiple First Vision accounts, against each other and the historical record (revival date, Smith family's testimony of joining Presbyterianism after

Alvin's death in 1823, Joseph's Trinitarian views, etc.) directly challenge Joseph Smith's claims.

Joseph's treasure hunting activities, his admittance that he was defrauding people through glass looking, and this same method being used for "translating" the Book of Mormon is a direct challenge to Joseph Smith's claims.

The presence of unique 1769 KJV errors and 1611 KJV italics in the Book of Mormon directly challenge Joseph Smith's claims.

Joseph marrying other men's wives (polyandry) is a direct challenge to Joseph's claims.

Joseph's record of deception and dishonesty for at least 10 years of his adult life by denying polygamy/polyandry to Emma, the Saints, and the world is not just a direct challenge to Joseph's claims but a direct hit to his integrity and character.

It goes on and on and on.

Despite Brett's attempt to contain the historical problems to stuff like Mark Hofmann's forgeries, City Creek, lack of financial transparency, etc. (all hallmarks of the modern Corporate Church), the problems go much, much more deeper than this. They go right into the very heart of Joseph Smith Mormonism - the very foundation itself.

Brett says:

So the best way to test to see if the Book of Mormon is true or not, is to follow its teachings and see if you get the results. If the Book of Mormon connects you to heaven, then does it really matter if there were horses in America, or if there was a neighboring town near Palmyra called Zarahemla? (As an aside, why would it be all that terrible if he did name the cities after places he was familiar with? Suppose the way they were really said were: Hangzhou, Shijiazhuang, Makhachkala, Magnitogorsk, Dniprodzerzhynsk (all real cities). I would rather refer to them as Heber, Sandy, Murray, Midvale, and Draper. He may just be trying to communicate ideas, not literal translations. The literal translation of proper nouns will not save you, nor will it connect you to heaven, but he does have to call the places something.)

Jeremy's response:

Again, this goes back to whom I'm addressing. I'm addressing what Brett refers to as the "Corporate Church," which millions subscribe to. These millions of Chapel Mormons do not subscribe to nor share Brett's or Snuffer's very unorthodox paradigm and worldview.

Chapel Mormons do not view the Book of Mormon as a nice and inspirational work of *fiction*. They do not get up on the pulpit every Fast Sunday to testify that this fictional book

doesn't have to be literal or true as it's a great instruction manual on docking with heaven.

History matters. Evidence matters. Occam's Razor applies.

Joseph Smith presented the Book of Mormon as a literal historical and factual book. He claimed a literal Hill Cumorah. He pointed to Zelph the Lamanite in the plains of Illinois while on Zion's Camp trek. He wrote about ancient Book of Mormon cities as he passed them in his travels. He claimed to have been visited and tutored by a real ancient inhabitant – then a resurrected being – who taught him about the society and events and culture and people as recorded in the Book of Mormon. Indeed, Joseph stated the following in the [Wentworth Letter](#):

"I was also informed concerning the **aboriginal inhabitants of this country** [America] and **shown who they were, and from whence they came**; a brief sketch of their **origin, progress, civilization, laws, governments**, of their righteousness and iniquity, and the blessings of God being finally withdrawn from them as a people, was [also] made known unto me; I was also told where were deposited some plates on which were engraven an abridgment of the records of the ancient prophets that had existed on this continent. The angel appeared to me three times the same night and unfolded the same things. After having received many visits from the angels of God, unfolding the majesty and glory of the events that should transpire in the last days, on the morning of the 22nd of September, A.D. 1827, the angel of the Lord delivered the records into my hands."

And...

"In this important and interesting book **the history of ancient America is unfolded, from its first settlement** by a colony that came from the Tower of Babel at the confusion of languages **to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era**. We are informed by these records that **America in ancient times has been inhabited by two distinct races of people**. The first were called Jaredites and came directly from the Tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites of the descendants of Joseph. The Jaredites were destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them **in the inheritance of the country**. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country..."

Sounds pretty literal to me. Joseph tied the Book of Mormon with real geography, real people, and real history. When Joseph made these claims, he withdrew any possible stake that could be made that the Book of Mormon is not historical or literal.

Horses matter. DNA matters. Steel matters. Anachronisms matter. Occam's Razor applies.

Brett says:

What if "translation" is more about communicating ideas than a literal word-to-word translation? What if, as Joseph is peering into the hat, he sees the idea that Nephi is trying to convey through the words of Isaiah and so he copies it, so as to communicate the idea?

Jeremy's response:

While this is a nice theory, it does not align with the historical record and affidavits of those who were there.

Book of Mormon Witness David Whitmer rejects Brett's hypothesis:

"Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. **One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English.** Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and **when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear.**"

– Quoted in Elder Russell M. Nelson's ["A Treasured Testament"](#)

Brett's claim likewise contradicts several other witness accounts, including those of Martin Harris, and the Church's recent [Gospel Topics article](#) on the translation process, which states that:

"Joseph placed either the interpreters or the seer stone in a hat, pressed his face into the hat to block out extraneous light, and **read aloud the English words that appeared on the instrument.**"

Brett says:

Most of the problems with "the Church" can be laid at the feet of the leaders of the church, their discrepancies/contradictions, their racism, sexism, pride, and self-righteousness. You eliminate all that, and the "Joseph Smith Restoration movement" isn't all that bad. When you accept that these people are not getting marching orders directly from God, then it's EASY to see why we are where we are.

Jeremy's response:

No. It's bad. The Book of Abraham is *not* "isn't all that bad". It's a fraud.

The Kinderhook Plates is *not* "isn't all that bad". It's a fraud.

The inconsistencies and contradictions of the multiple First Vision accounts to each other and to the historical record are a serious and direct problem and challenge to Joseph's first vision claims.

Joseph marrying other living men's wives, including Apostle Orson Hyde's wife while he was a mission to Palestine to dedicate the land for the gospel, is not "isn't all that bad". It's bad.

These problems have nothing to do with the modern "Corporate Church" aside from the Church concealing and hiding these historical problems from its Chapel Mormons. These problems are directly tied in to "Joseph Smith Restoration".

"When you accept that these people are not getting marching orders directly from God, then it's EASY to see why we are where we are."

The problem with this claim is that these "people" (aka leaders known and sustained by Mormons past and present as "prophets, seers, and revelators" claimed direct orders from God). These "prophets, seers, and revelators" claimed and pointed to the Mormon god and revelation as the reasoning behind the ban on the blacks for 130 years. Of course, the Church now threw these guys under the bus for their "theories," which of course are now disavowed.

Adam-God is another example. Brigham Young taught this doctrine for close to 25 years. He taught it twice in General Conference. He put it in the lecture at the veil in the Temples. More importantly, he said that God *revealed* this teaching and doctrine to him. Today, this past doctrine taught by yesterday's "prophet, seer, and revelator" is now part of the [7 deadly heresies](#) according to Bruce R. McConkie.

So, I disagree with Brett's assertion that these "people" did not get marching orders directly from God. Just the opposite: they did.

Brett says:

See, I believe God's mission for Joseph was restoring lost knowledge about how to connect with heaven. It wasn't God's desire for us to have a New Testament church. But that's what the converted Campbellites and Sidney Rigdon's congregation wanted. God doesn't need a church; He needs families. The first many generations were simply ordered in families. The PATRIARCHS led their families. No church. Don't you see, even the structure of the church was

made in the image of the family. You have Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (3) the FATHERS (a First Presidency), then you have the 12 SONS of Jacob (12 apostles), then you have the 70 GRANDSONS (Exodus 1:5) for the Seventy.

So Joseph made a church for the Saints. It wasn't precisely what the Lord had in mind, but He often succumbs to what we want. See Ezekiel 14. (Though, next time they mention follow the prophet at church, have a look at Ez. 14:7-8).

Jeremy's response:

Right...which perfectly explains why the Lord would say the following:

"And also those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually—" – [D&C 1:30](#)

Brett says:

I would submit that the reason we should stay, is because the important parts are true. The non-important parts aren't true.

Jeremy's response:

What "important parts" are true?

Speaking for myself personally, my integrity will not allow me to be a part of an organization that is blatantly dishonest about its origins and history. In fact, applying the [Gospel Principles manual on honesty](#) leaves me no other alternative:

"When we speak untruths, we are guilty of lying. We can also intentionally deceive others by a gesture or a look, by silence, or by telling only part of the truth. Whenever we lead people in any way to believe something that is not true, we are not being honest."

Brett says:

We have made the church and its leaders an idol. We rise when they enter. When we have questions, we ask, "Well, what have the brethren said about the matter?" We have become Brethrenites.

Jeremy's response:

This cult-like reverence for the Brethren is not the product of the modern Church. It's the

product of Joseph Smith. His successors just perpetuated and continued this reverence.

Of course, the modern benefit of this top-down Authoritarian structure is that it serves the Church's needs well in extracting obedience from its members.

Brett says:

Everyone is on a different level of progression. That is why the Spirit says different things to one person than to another. The Spirit could very well tell a Methodist to stay in the Methodist church. That is right for that person then. I don't believe the Spirit is so much black and white, rather different shades of grey. We are all somewhere in between and the Spirit adapts to what each of us need.

Jeremy's response:

Let's test this hypothesis. Let's grant that the Holy Spirit "says different things to one person than to another" and that this "Spirit could very well tell a Methodist to stay in the Methodist church...that is right for that person then."

Who's not to say that this same Source that tells Mormons that Mormonism is true only does so because it's "right for them"?

How do we know that Mormonism isn't just a small stepping stone to a greater truth? What if this same Source tells some Mormons that Mormonism is false because leaving Mormonism is right for them? What if Buddhism is the truth? Islam? No religion at all? What if, like the Methodist example, Mormonism is just another stepping stone that just leads to the real truth? What if Mormonism, in the bigger picture of things, is just as false as the other religions Mormonism claims to be false?

Brett says:

I don't have time explain my view on all the known problems, but let me address some of the translational issues with Joseph (Abraham, seer stone, kinderhook plates¹⁰, etc.)

¹⁰ Joseph never translated anything from them that would be considered scripture. In fact, all he did with the KH plates was ask someone to fetch his Egyptian Alphabet. He had made the Alphabet while translating the Book of Abraham. When it was fetched, he looked for symbols on the KH plates that matched anything in his Alphabet. One figure matched and it was a figure that indicated being a descendant of Ham, which is exactly what is recorded by Joseph's scribe in his journal. No seerstone, no urim and thummim, no revelation from heaven. All he did was match up a drawing to his attempted Alphabet. It's crazy that people get so worked up over the KH plates.

Jeremy's response:

Brett is using FAIR/Don Bradley's Kinderhook Theory, which I've debunked [here](#).

As I've stated in Debunking FAIR's Debunking:

Even if FAIR's theory is true and Joseph did a secular translation of the plates based on a character that somewhat resembles (only after a bit of deconstructing) a character in the GAEL, the secular-translation argument is simply unbelievable. There is no evidence that Joseph Smith considered the Kinderhook Plates translation a secular translation. Moreover, there is no precedent for Joseph Smith claiming to have made secular translations of events relating to ancient Biblical or Book of Mormon history. Joseph Smith never caveated his translations by saying that they were secular only, and it is unreasonable to have expected him to do so. Indeed, such a caveat clearly would have been important enough for Joseph's personal scribe William Clayton to note when he recorded the description of Joseph Smith's translation.

Contrary to thinking Joseph Smith's translation was secular, the Church, until the Kinderhook Plates were revealed as a hoax in 1980, trumpeted the Kinderhook Plates translation as evidence of Joseph Smith's divine ability to translate ancient documents.

Moreover, the GAEL does not account for the assertion that the dead person with whom the plates were found was also the author. This assertion must have come from some other source. Where? Some other secular source?

Joseph was simply off the mark. He got it wrong. If Joseph can be so wrong about a 19th century hoax while claiming it's ancient and that it's so-and-so who was descended from so-and-so, how do we know that Joseph didn't likewise make stuff up with the keystone Book of Mormon? The Book of Abraham?

At the end of the day? The Kinderhook Plates are a 19th century hoax, the GAEL is gibberish nonsense, and Joseph not only mistranslated the fake plates but he legitimized the hoax as an ancient record...all while failing to discern the fraud.

In other words, Joseph did not merely say that the Kinderhook plates were authentic; he went much further than that – he described their contents. Like the Book of Abraham, Joseph Smith failed the test as a translator.

Brett says:

Do you worry about how Mormon compiled the record, or Matthew, or John or Moses? If you're concerned about the means of Joseph's translation, why aren't you concerned about the others?

Jeremy's response:

Because Matthew and John didn't run a Ouija Board business beforehand with a rock in a hat (or stick or whatever) defrauding customers before turning around and using the same exact method of fraud for supposedly a legitimate purpose.

Ditto for Moses.

Brett says:

You can get mad at Joseph for not being frank about the fact that he wasn't translating the way we understand, but what if he didn't know at the time?

What if the Lord was just using him to disseminate info to us through all sorts of means? He didn't even use anything to correct the Bible? No one makes a big deal about that.

Jeremy's response:

What if the rock in the hat thing was just a prop? What if Joseph needed to do it in the early days with the Book of Mormon but abandoned the method when he had sufficient believers who believed in his translation abilities? What if it became unnecessary and useless by that point?

Brett says:

Getting worked up about all these little issues just baffles me. You were fine with angels and golden plates left in holes in up-state New York, but he sticks his head in a hat and everyone loses their minds. If you're a cynic, shouldn't you have been lost at golden plates buried in up-state New York?

Jeremy's response:

It appears that Brett misses the point entirely.

Unlike the other claims (angels, golden plates, etc.) which are supernatural in nature, the rock in the hat isn't. The rock was just a common stone that Joseph dug out of his neighbor's property in 1822...a year before Moroni showed up in Joseph's bedroom.

This same occult method is the same method that Joseph used to defraud his neighbors and

customers out of their money by claiming to see buried treasure in the earth, which he later admitted he couldn't see.

Brett says:

But you see, I don't really care about "the church." My focus is changed. I'm far more interested in the gospel, and seeking out Christ. Living the gospel and seeking Christ are more than enough reasons to stay active. There's just a distinction between the church and the gospel. (See Elder Poleman's talk back in 1983.¹¹) When you focus on living the gospel and being Christlike, there is no need for continual guilt trips about home teaching, it just takes care of itself.

Jeremy's response:

I find it bizarre how the restored gospel of Jesus Christ went from "pure and simple" to messy and complex. Is this what Mormonism really has come down to? You have to read just the right scholarly books/works (PTHG included) under just the right conditions and under just the right guidance in order to "get it"?

Brett's definition of the "gospel" versus a Chapel Mormon's definition of the "gospel" versus an FLDS member's definition of the "gospel" is all over the place.

Brett says:

I don't have time to go into all the polygamy, other than to say, for having 30+ wives, it's awfully odd that he never fathered another child with any of them. I'd submit that the relationships he had with them are not the husband-wife relationship one normally has. (Yes, I know there are documents saying he had sex with them, there are arguments that contest that. Again, I don't have time to go deeper here.)

Jeremy's response:

This is incorrect.

I address this claim [here](#). Joseph had at least two children from his polygamous/polyandrous marriages.

An article written by LDS owned *Deseret News* about ongoing DNA research on Joseph Smith's potential children with his polygamous wives states:

But not every case can be solved. A few alleged children of Joseph Smith died as infants and their burial places are not known. Descendants of daughters are

particularly difficult to test conclusively because the easy-to-identify Y chromosome signature only works to identify male descendants.

Brett cannot possibly make the claim that Joseph “never fathered another child with any of them [polygamous wives]” because of the above fact alone.

Brett says:

All accounts are true. They all happened. He only saw an angel. And he saw the Father and the Son. It all happened simultaneously and it was all distinct. And each account was an attempt to communicate the idea that was important to communicate at that time—or something like that.

Jeremy’s response:

Well, this sounds pretty convenient to me.

(1832 account) Joseph searched the scriptures and came to the conclusion that the true Church of Christ was lost and no longer on the earth and went to pray for forgiveness of his sins...

(1838 account) Wait, no, Joseph had no idea which Church was right to join and decided to go ask in prayer for “it never entered his heart” that they were not true.

Seems legit.

Brett says:

There is nothing in <http://cesletter.com/> that proves the BOM is false.

Jeremy’s response:

I can point you to many, many people who strongly disagree with you. The presence of unique 1769 KJV errors, 1611 KJV italics, Late War, DNA, anachronisms, etc. are pretty damning evidences against the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

Brett says:

though I personally have ideas that overcome the letter’s objections.

Jeremy’s response:

I’d love to hear them. Quite frankly, if they’re anything like some of Brett’s claims in this letter (polygamy claims, Kinderhook Plates, etc.), I have a feeling I’m going to be disappointed.

Conclusion:

Mormonism rises or falls on Joseph Smith and what happened (or didn't) between 1820–1844. If Joseph Smith really told the truth and his claims are legit, then Brett and Snuffer's worldview and paradigm deserve a good look. If it didn't, then not only does reason demand we discard Joseph Smith Mormonism and its claims, but that we discard the "Corporate" Church's exclusive truth claims as well.

At the end of the day, this is what matters. All of this analysis of the Book of Mormon meant this or meant that or Bruce claimed that we're Gentiles or that the modern Church is apostate and corrupt doesn't mean anything if Mormonism and its foundation was conceived and birthed in fraud.

Brett's premise is based on Mormonism's foundation being based on legitimacy. My premise is based on that Joseph's and the Church's truth claims were never legitimate to begin with, as Mormonism's very foundation was conceived and birthed in fraud.